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~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~Soviet UnionSoviet Union Background:

The Chinese will have noted continued Soviet interest in detente despite the trade setback and our own recent foreign policy difficulties. They should also have noticed the sterner tone of remarks by the President and yourself concerning detente in recent statements. They know we consulted with the Russians concerning evacuation and a possible political solution in the waning days of the Vietnam debacle. (We did not go to the Chinese at all after their lack of cooperation on Cambodia.)

Peking may be uneasy about the full upcoming agenda with Moscow, particularly in contrast with our bare slate with Peking (e.g., the... Brezhnev summit, SALT II, CSCE, Middle East collaboration, etc.).

Note: Your meeting with Gromyko will be announced on Monday, May 12. You should alert the Chinese in this meeting and explain what will be discussed.

In the past, we have consistently used a heavy anti-Soviet tone in our dealings with the Chinese. While you want to reassure the Ambassador that we will be particularly firm with Moscow during this troubled period, there may be some advantage in leaving the Chinese somewhat uneasy about our Soviet connection.

The Russian negotiator in the Sino-Soviet border talks recently returned home after three fruitless months in Peking. Both sides have been cynical about the stalemate, now in its sixth year.

Soviet Talking Points:

-- The President and I have made it very clear in recent statements that we will not allow Moscow to seek advantages as a result of recent international events.

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-- As you know, Brezhnev's trip has been delayed until September. We are aiming to complete a SALT II agreement by then, but are encountering the usual Soviet haggling in negotiations.

-- I am meeting with Foreign Minister Gromyko during my forthcoming European trip. This will take place in Vienna on May 19-20. (Preview what will take place.)

-- We met informally a couple of weeks ago in London with some of our allies as well as the Soviets on the question of exporting nuclear materials. We will reconvene in June. The purpose is to dampen the prospects for non-proliferation. We have assumed your government would not be interested in such an exercise even though we do not believe proliferation is in your interest (e.g., India, Taiwan, South Korea).

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